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ABSTRACT

This lecture describes the organization and kinds of pedagogical research undertaken in the United Kingdom Open University and, through a case study of educational research in the recently introduced Arts Foundation Course (A102), to show how one type of research can contribute to course organization and development. The Institute of Educational Technology (IET), a unit within the Open University, is primarily involved in pedagogical research and is the focus of this paper. Types of educational research discussed include comparative-evaluative research, investigative-evaluative research, and action-research or theoretical-investigative research. Research methods are also mentioned with interviews and surveys emerging as primary data collection tools. The lecture concludes with a brief discussion of some issues central to the organization, conduct, and purposes of pedagogical research in distance education. (10 references) (DB)

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PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE UK OU

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Summary Ellie Chambers has a first degree in English Literature and a Masters Degree in the Philosophy of Education. She has been employed in the OU's Institute of Educational Technology since 1974, mainly working in the development and evaluation of courses in the Humanities, and has been Deputy Director and Head of the Teaching and Consultancy Centre of the Institute since 1987.

The purpose of this lecture is to describe the organisation and kinds of pedagogical research undertaken in the UK OU and, through a case study of research into the recently introduced Arts Foundation Course (A102), to show how one type of research, a form of 'action-research', can contribute to course development. The lecture concludes with brief discussion of some issues central to the organisation, conduct and purposes of pedagogical research in distance education.

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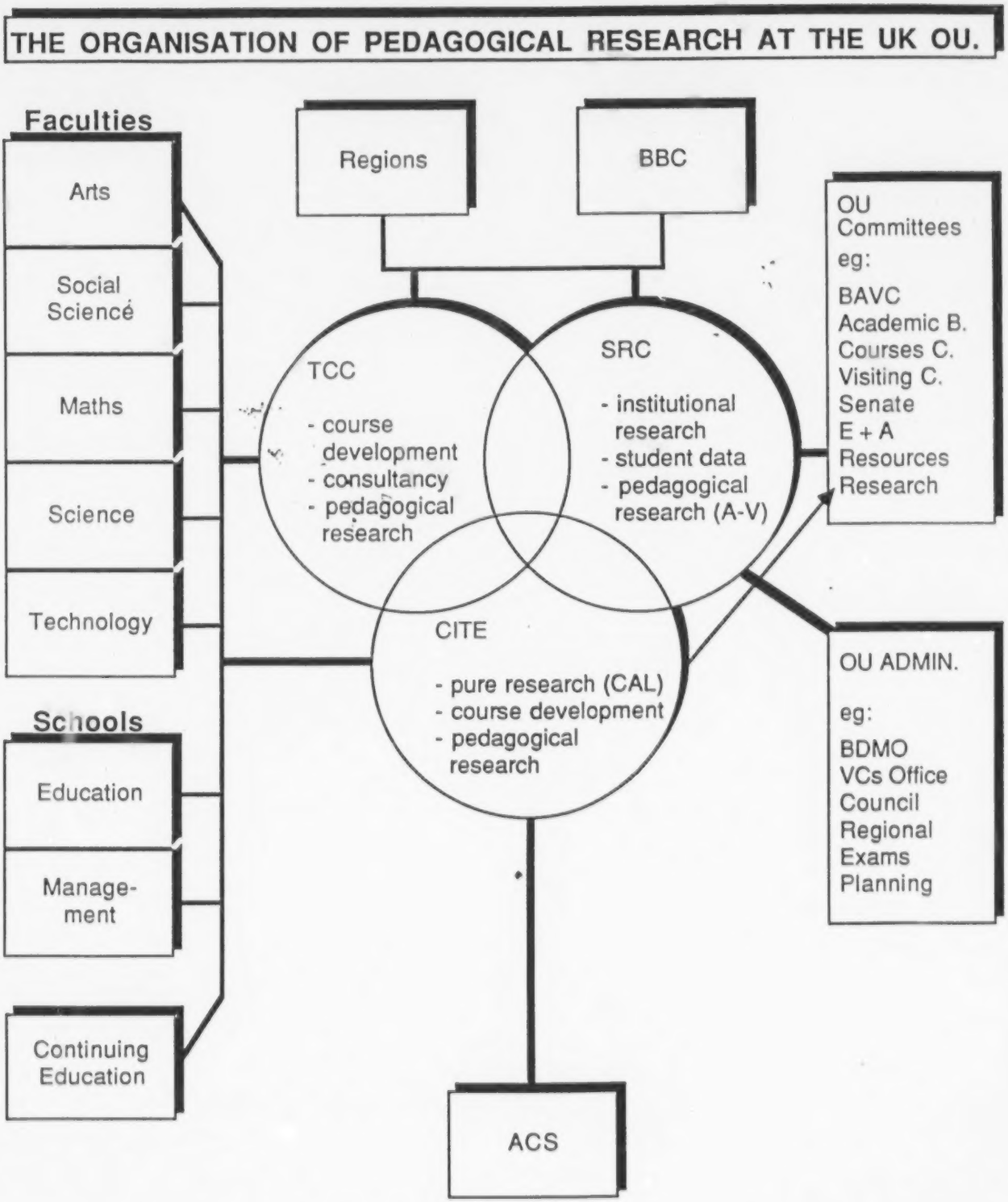
Sandberg, Denmark. 1989.

1. The Organisation of Pedagogical Research at the UK OU

Pedagogical research at the OU is undertaken for the direct benefit of its distant students, whether in the long or shorter term. When the UK OU first began making distance education courses in 1969 very little was known about how to teach at tertiary level solely by means of text and audio-visual media, or how (and even whether) students would learn successfully with little or no direct engagement with teachers or other learners. Therefore it was imperative that from the start systems for investigating and experimenting with distance teaching and learning methods should be established - and equally that these systems should soon yield the kind of information and insights that could help course-makers improve courses currently on offer and plan more effective courses for the future. Accordingly, pedagogical research is funded from the Government Department of Education and Science block grant, that supports the development and maintenance of the UK OU undergraduate programme generally, and so must contribute directly to the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of these courses. Most pedagogical research is therefore of a very practical kind, often engaged in for quite specific purposes, and is organised in such a way as is intended to make its findings accessible to the main course-producing units and policy-making bodies in the university. Most pedagogical research is directed and undertaken in one 'place', by members of the university's Institute of Educational Technology (IET).

Figure 1 is a simplified representation of the relationships between the three Centres that make up IET (the overlapping circles in the centre of the diagram) and the academic and administrative units that are our 'clients' and whose members may collaborate in the research. To the left are the main academic, course-producing, units - five Faculties, two Schools and the Continuing Education department (which for example, produces courses for the community, for adults in their leisure-time and for updating professional teachers, engineers and the like). Members of IET work with each of these units as curriculum developers, instructional designers, and pedagogical researchers - particularly members of the Teaching and Consultancy Centre (TCC) and, with special regard to applications of computing to distance learning, the Centre for Information Technology in Education (CITE). In addition, TCC may collaborate with Regional OU colleagues for research purposes - thus being able to contact students in the regions around the country more directly - and CITE often works with members of Academic Computing Services (ACS) on projects of joint interest. IET's third Centre, the Student Research Centre, works mainly to university policy-making committees like the Broadcast and Audio Visual Committee (BAVC) and the Exams and Assessment Committee (E & A) and administrative units such as Planning Office, searching out and submitting data that enables them to make informed decisions about the formation of policy and deployment of resources. They also conduct research of a more theoretical kind into student learning. Both TCC and SRC also have close links with BBC colleagues. Although members of IET all have a 'home' in one of the three Centres, they often collaborate on particular projects. The SRC makes available to everyone its expertise in research methodologies

FIGURE 1


THE ORGANISATION OF PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH AT THE UK OU.
Faculties
Arts
Social Sciencé
Maths
Science
Technology
Schools
Education
Manage-ment
Continuing Education
Regions
BBC
OU Committees eg:
BAVC
Academic B.
Courses C.
Visiting C.
Senate
E + A
Resources
Research
TCC
- course development
- consultancy
- pedagogical research
SRC
- institutional research
- student data
- pedagogical research (A-V)
CITE
- pure research (CAL)
- course development
- pedagogical research
OU ADMIN.
eg:
BDMO
VCs Office
Council
Regional
Exams
Planning
ACS

and gives practical help with such matters as questionnaire design and interpretation, and data analysis, both within and beyond the Institute.

Pedagogical research, then, is largely the responsibility of an identifiable unit within the University, IET, but one which is organised internally in a particularly flexible way and which has links with all other units, academic and administrative, within the University. There are advantages for the institution in this arrangement, - as opposed to, say, having pedagogical researchers as members of each of these other units and at work within them, or as members of an administrative rather than an independent academic unit - but there are also disadvantages or difficulties in this arrangement, both for IET and for the University, which I will touch on later.

2. The Institute of Educational Technology and Types of Pedagogical Research

As I have said, all three IET Centres are involved in pedagogical research to a greater or lesser extent (see Fig.2). This is my main focus here. But I should say in passing that all three Centres, particularly CITE and SRC, also pursue 'pure' research which may or may not be applicable to the University's teaching in the short run. CITE, for example, conducts research into the latest technological advances in the educational computing field (e.g. developments in video-disk and CD ROM technologies, which are so expensive that it is hard to imagine the University using them even in the medium term). Members of CITE also supervise the research of around 12 PhD students at any one time. SRC's Student Learning Project has a basis in and contributes to current theories of learning though its influence on OU practice is at best patchy and indirect. Some of its work in the field of audio-visual research is futuristic, for example into the uses of European Satellite technology. TCC, as its title suggests, focuses squarely on pedagogy and its members tend to 'specialise' in the 'teaching and learning of Mathematics'/Science/the Humanities etc., working alongside the relevant Faculty. But it, and to a lesser extent the other two Centres, also undertake Consultancy work outside the OU - for example, running courses in aspects of Distance and Open Learning for trainers and others in industrial and commercial companies, writing and publishing teaching packs in this field, advising and helping other universities and public sector organisations to set up distance learning units and projects, and evaluating courses and teaching materials prepared by them. All the work produced in the course of these varied activities is written up as internal papers or stored in an IET archive. The Institute also hosts, and makes extensive use of, the International Centre for Distance Learning (ICDL), a library of distance learning resource material and a source of information about the activities of distance teaching institutions around the world, financed by the Commonwealth of Learning. All this specialist research and consultancy work of course informs, extends and enriches the contribution we are able to make to teaching and learning within the University.

Returning to pedagogical research, Fig.3 provides a broad summary of the kinds of study we engage in. I shall look at each category in turn.

FIGURE 2

THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Management Committee

Director	Head of CITE	(14 Staff, 12 Students)
Administrator	Head of SRC	(15 Staff)
Senior Secretary	Head of TCC	(20 Staff)

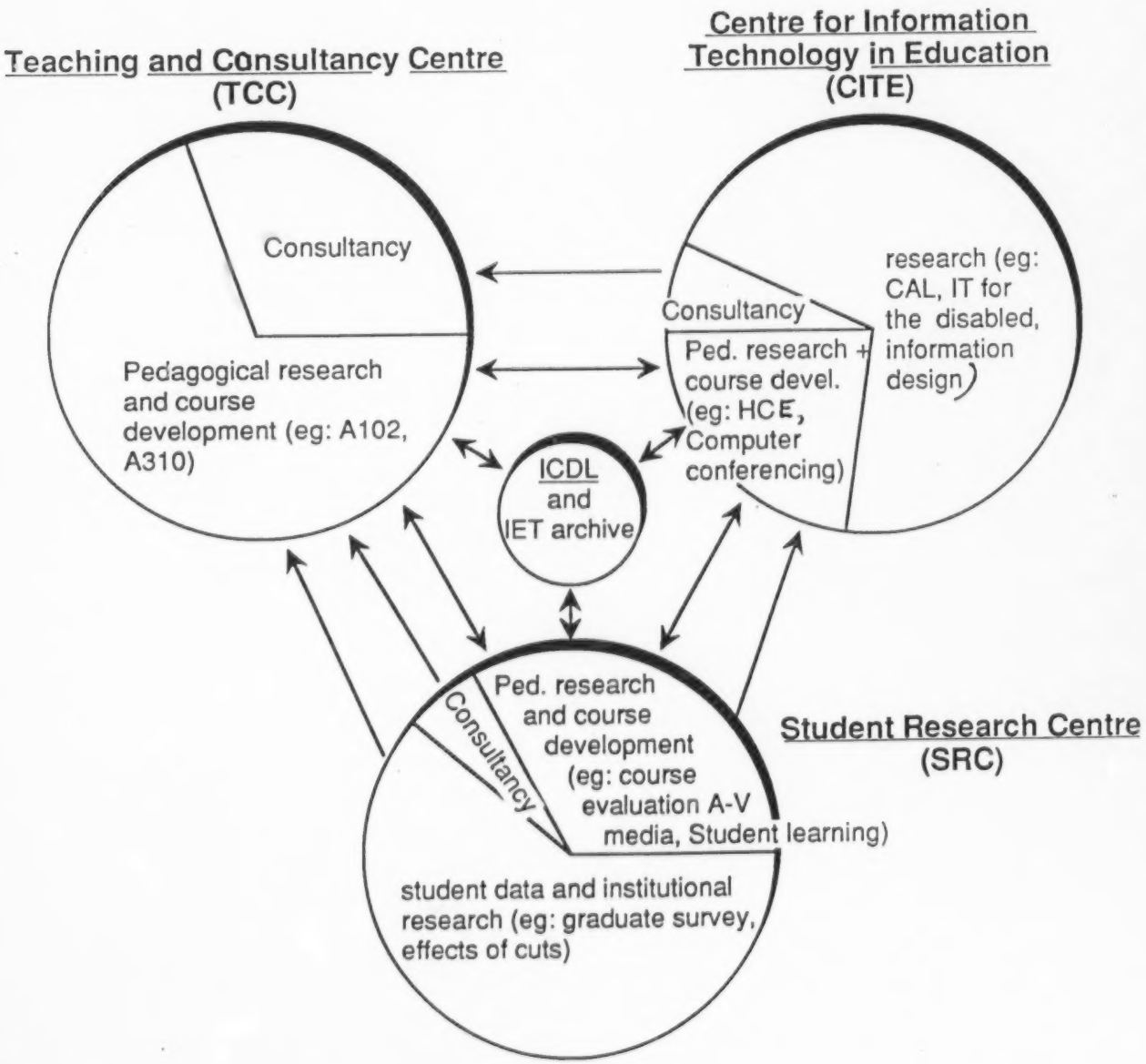

Teaching and Consultancy Centre (TCC)
Consultancy
Pedagogical research and course development (eg: A102, A310)
Centre for Information Technology in Education (CITE)
Consultancy
Ped. research + course devel. (eg: HCE, Computer conferencing)
research (eg: CAL, IT for the disabled, information design)
ICDL and IET archive
Student Research Centre (SRC)
Consultancy
Ped. research and course development (eg: course evaluation A-V media, Student learning)
student data and institutional research (eg: graduate survey, effects of cuts)

FIGURE 3

TYPES OF PEDAGOGICAL RESEARCH

TYPE OF RESEARCH	INITIATORS	IMMEDIATE RECIPIENTS	BENEFICIARIES	PRODUCTS
'Comparative - evaluative' e.g. Annual Review of new Courses	Institution	Administration/ Committees Academic units	Institution Faculties/course teams	Report Issues raised in Faculty Committees and course teams
'Investigative - evaluative' e.g. A-V media, HCE, computer-mediated communication	Institution IET course teams	Admin/Committees course teams BBC Policy makers	Institution course teams future students wider educational community	Reports Committee papers publications conference papers
'Theoretical - investigative' e.g. student learning project	IET	IET	IET wider educational community	published papers
'Action - research' e.g. course development, A102, T102, DT200	IET Faculty and/or course team	course teams regional colleagues	course teams students	reports changes to courses and materials
'Theorising practice' e.g. A310, 'Workload'	IET Faculty/course team	course team committee	institution course team wider educational community	reports published papers conference papers longer term changes in course development

(a) Comparative-evaluative Research A paradigm case of this kind of study is the 'Annual Survey of New Courses', produced by SRC: every year, at the end of the year, each new course the University produces is evaluated by means of a two-part questionnaire mailed to a random sample of students. The second part of the questionnaire is tailor-made for each course, consisting of a series of questions the course team wishes to ask. However, part 1 of the questionnaire is standard, consisting of questions about the use students have made of the various components of the course (text, set books, TV, radio, cassettes, tutorial services, residential school, assignments and such like) and how helpful they have found each one; the students' attitudes towards the course as a whole - rated for interest, difficulty and workload; the students' opinions about the nature and fairness of the course examination; more detailed questions about the extent to which students' view, listen to or use TV, audio programmes and computer software, and how helpful they find them. Thus we are able to make comparisons between courses on all these dimensions, not only each year but from year to year. As a result we are able to talk of 'mean' ratings for the helpfulness of various course components, for example, and to measure the performance of each new course against those means. We can also calculate 'Faculty means' and so compare the performance of a new Technology course at third level with previous third level Technology courses, and so on. All such information is presented in the Report on the Annual Survey of New Courses which is disseminated widely within the University.[1] A course which compared very badly with the University and/or Faculty means on some dimension might either ask IET to undertake further research of a more illuminative kind - to explore the problem further and suggest ways in which improvements might be made to an aspect of the course - or on occasion it might straightaway apply for resources to re-make that aspect of it. Otherwise, data of this kind is very useful for OU administrative and 'quality control' purposes: it lets Faculty administrators see how well the resources they have allotted to a particular course have been used and it acts as a spur to course team efforts.

(b) Investigative-evaluative Research Into this category fall projects which set out to investigate aspects of OU course provision (in practice usually expensive ones) at least in part in order to assess their cost-effectiveness. Examples are research by SRC into the particular pedagogic characteristics and uses of various audio-visual media (in the past, broadcast television and audio-cassettes, currently video-cassettes), and by CITE into home computing (HC) and computer-mediated communication (CMC). All these projects draw on past and current OU practice, usually on the work of particular course teams, and on this basis aim to come up with recommendations about the extent and nature of future uses of such teaching media and strategies. The HC evaluation is a particularly good example of this kind of research. CITE has been involved in HC from the start of the University's interest in experimenting with the idea of producing courses that require students to use computer software on their own

computers at home. (Incidentally, as a prelude SRC was asked to find out how many students already had a computer, or could get access to one, (e.g. at work) or would be prepared to buy or rent one, if the OU introduced this kind of course).[2] Members of the Centre acted as advisers to the pioneering course teams, also helping to produce software and writing parts of the teaching texts. It was clear from the start that a far-reaching policy of this kind, with its potential for discriminating against poorer students, those out of work, and perhaps particularly women, would need to be evaluated carefully.[3] Also course teams were not sure that their courses would work with students new to computing - they needed to know how basic to get, how long students would need to spend at the computer, how well integrated this aspect of the course could be, and so forth. IET decided to resource a research group to undertake a three-year 'Home Computing Evaluation' project, encompassing all the courses that would be using HC during that period - even if only to enable students to 'talk' to each other (CMC). The project involves thorough investigation of all the aspects of HC mentioned above, i.e. including issues like access to computers, gender differences and so forth, as well as detailed evaluation of each of the courses using HC. The project group aims to help the University make a sound HC policy for the 1990s.[4]

Incidentally, this group comprises members of each of IET's Centres and is a good example of the flexible organisation that enables IET's management team to bring together groups of people for particular, pressing, purposes sometimes at fairly short notice. It is very difficult to organise the work of a group of academics who are in collaboration with almost every other unit in the University, subject to pressures that cannot all be accommodated, and who have to be able to initiate and respond to innovative practices in the University. The current structure of the Institute, headed by a Management Committee as outlined in Fig. 2, is the most successful so far - but it took some fourteen years to arrive at it. The Director and Heads of Centres (who are also Deputy Directors) are all elected to those positions by their colleagues for periods of three years and so have the 'permission' of their constituencies to initiate policies about what directions the Institute as a whole will take, to try to determine its priorities, and organise its work on a day-to-day and year-by-year basis. Policies and priorities are debated and ratified by the Board of the Institute, of which all IET academic staff are members.

(c) Theoretical-investigative

Action-Research This kind of pedagogical research is designed to make an impact on current practice and to result in change, thus contributing to the development of present and future OU courses. Into this category fall TCC's efforts at the developmental testing and in-depth evaluation of particular courses in order that improvements may be made to them, before and after publication respectively. Normally the TCC person conducting this kind of research will be

familiar with the subject matter of the course concerned and, through membership of the course team from an early stage, will have participated in and be aware of the history of the development of the course. Unless an evaluator has these kinds of knowledge she will be unable to conduct research (frame appropriate questions, or understand and interpret feedback that is often discursive and at the same time very detailed) that will enable her to make the kind of well-supported, authoritative recommendations for change that are likely to persuade the course team actually to make such changes. In Section 3 of the paper I will focus on this kind of pedagogical research.

Figure 3 represents all this information, and more, in table form.

Theorising Practice starts where 'action-research' ends - and, in turn, informs the researchers' approach to her action-research. When the results of pedagogical research have to be visible and convincing, as ours do, the relationship between theory and practice is close and iterative - as we shall see.

3. Pedagogical Research and Course Development

I shall look in some detail at the evaluation of A102: An Arts Foundation Course as an example of the way action-research can contribute to course development in a distance education system. This course is the Arts Faculty's introductory course with a student population of around 5 thousand each year. As such, in the first half of the course students are introduced to each of the major disciplines that make up the Faculty and in the second half they engage in an interdisciplinary study of Victorian Britain (1850-1890). The structure of the course is represented in Fig.4. It is explained to students in a Course Guide.[5] A fuller description of the course is attached as an Appendix. It is very important to the Faculty that the Foundation Course attracts students, keeps them, and enables them to succeed and so pass on to its second and third level courses in large numbers. So, when we were planning an evaluation of the course we wanted to find answers to some broad questions:

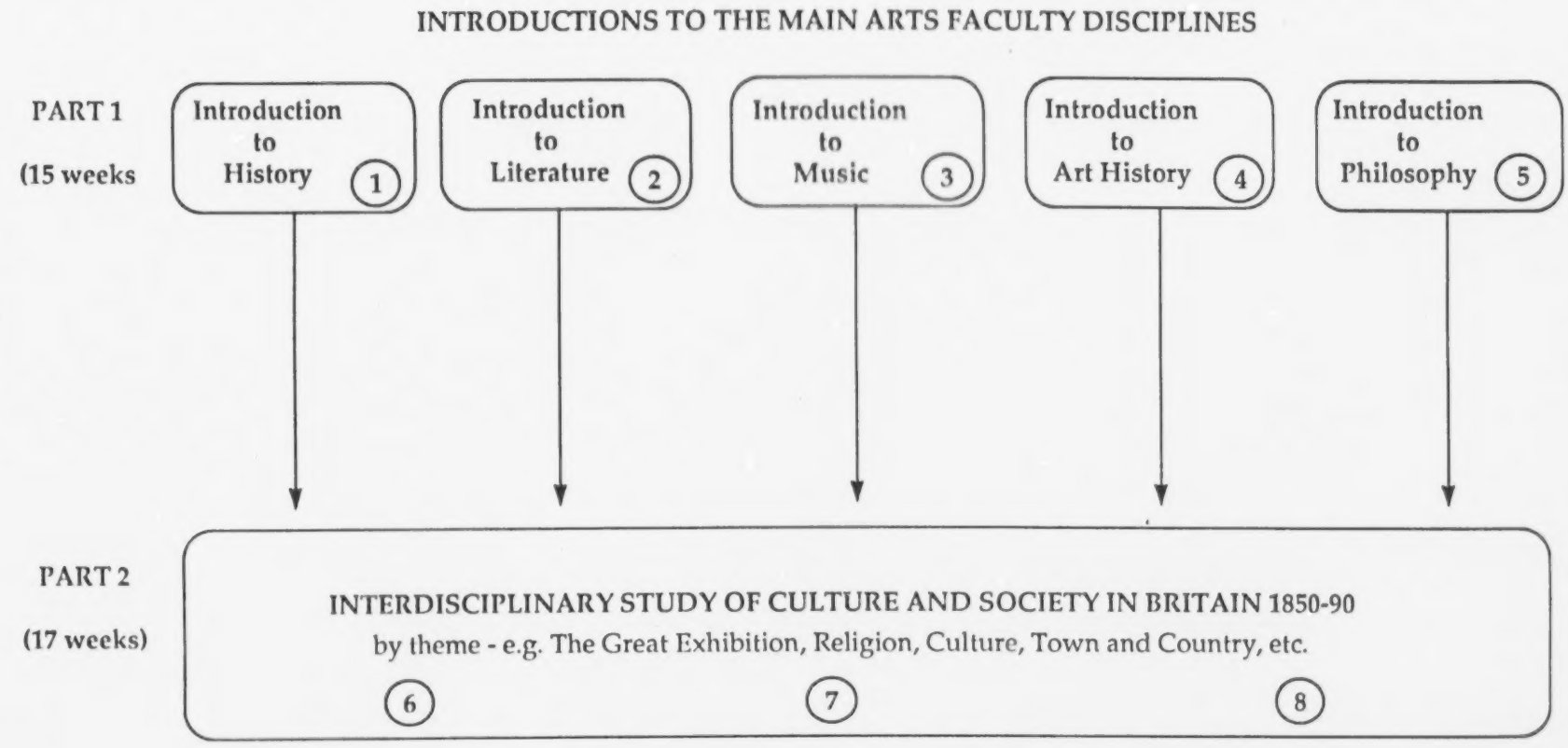
- how good a course is A102?
- how well does it introduce students to the Arts disciplines and to interdisciplinary study?
- do we need to change anything?

In order to answer these questions we needed to look in detail at every 'block' of course material, at the contributions made by different media (text, TV, radio, audio, illustration,) and to discover which of them students found particularly difficult and uninteresting (or the reverse), in which we overloaded students with work (a reason students commonly give for withdrawing from courses), and so on.

This we did in a series of (12) questionnaires over the year, which a different random sample of (some 350) students completed each time. SRC helped us construct the questionnaires and administered them. The

FIGURE 4

THE STRUCTURE OF A102 : AN ARTS FOUNDATION COURSE


INTRODUCTIONS TO THE MAIN ARTS FACULTY DISCIPLINES
PART 1
(15 weeks
Introduction to History 1
Introduction to Literature 2
Introduction to Music 3
Introduction to Art History 4
Introduction to Philosophy 5
PART 2
(17 weeks)
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY IN BRITAIN 1850-90
by theme - e.g. The Great Exhibition, Religion, Culture, Town and Country, etc.
6
7
8

(1) – (8) represent written assignments students are asked to submit.

questionnaires allowed students to comment on their answers to coded questions, at length if they wished to: the coded questions were analysed by computer and answers to the open-ended questions interpreted by the researchers. We also conducted structured interviews with a small number of students during their compulsory residential week of summer school. After students had taken the end of course exam, but before the results were known, we sent out a thirteenth, retrospective, questionnaire allowing students to comment on every block of the course from that perspective. This enable us to draw interesting conclusions. Some extracts from our summary report (summarising some 100 pages of reports we had prepared throughout the year) appear as Figs.5, 6, and 7.[6]

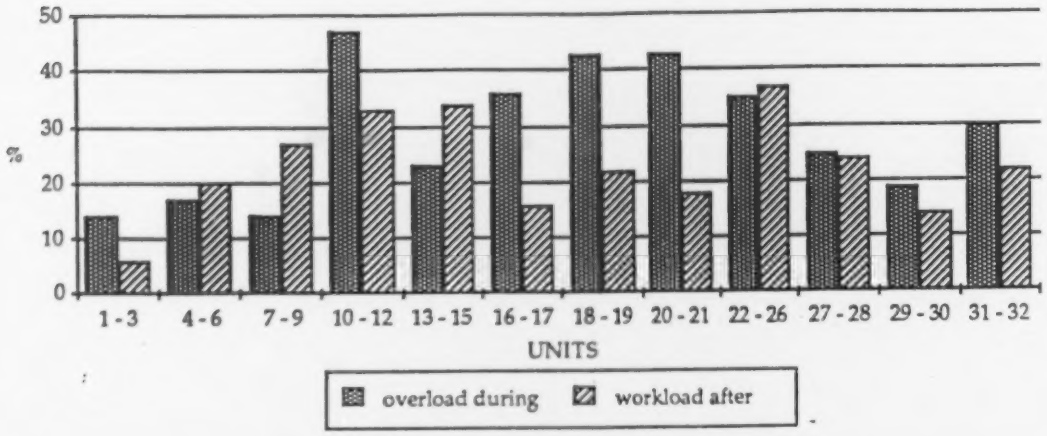
As a result of all this, and our study of objective data such as the rate of student dropout from the course, analysis of grades for assignments, the percentage sitting and passing the exam,[7] we were able to answer the broad questions we began with and to make specific proposals for changes to the course material and the conduct of summer school. Comparison with other OU courses, and in particular other Foundation courses - as a result of the comparative-evaluative research conducted by SRC that I described earlier - revealed that A102 had the lowest drop-out rate of any Foundation Course (18%), a good exam pass rate of 95% and, for the Arts Faculty, a record 7% distinction rate - still too low we feel. The TV programmes had excellent viewing and appreciation rates compared with other courses; the written assignments were highly regarded and tutorial sessions and summer school both rated highly. However, the data revealed that workload was a problem at certain points, in particular in connection with the Introduction to Art History[8] (units 10-12) and, later on, in the period following assignment 6 (see Figures 4 and 5). On all the other measures, though, the Introduction to Philosophy[9] (units 13-15) presents a problem: it has by far the highest 'difficulty' rating and was not found very rewarding or interesting. (See Figures 6 and 7.) On closer inspection, particularly of students' responses to open-ended questions and from interview data, we decided that it was a particular part of the units that was causing the trouble and not the units as a whole or the overall conception of the Introduction to Philosophy. Often students are quite precise and very direct and frank in their responses to questions about course material, leaving you in no doubt about how they feel:

> Part X was awful, and some parts extremely difficult, e.g. Part X, chapter 2 and pp.58/59.... This was the assignment I really wasn't interested in because it was so badly presented. YUCK! This has put me off...completely.

In this case we recommended that the offending part be completely rewritten, expensive and fairly drastic action which the course team agreed to. Other problems were solved either by judicious pruning of course material or by preparing supplementary material.

FIGURE 5

A COMPARISON OF PERCEIVED WORKLOAD DURING AND AFTER THE A102 COURSE(1987).



1. Generally speaking, students remember the A102 workload as less onerous than they felt it to be when first studying the course material.

2. Students' perceptions shift most markedly with regard to:
   Introduction to Art History
   Units 16 and 17
   Religion: Conformity and Controversey
   Moral Values and the Social Order.

   All are said to have involved less work than first thought. As regards Art History, the difference in perception may be due to to the fact that Art historical method is particularly well reinforced in the interdisciplinary blocks. In the case of the later units, we deduce from students' comments that they may have felt overburdened as a consequence of having fallen behind with the course (ie.a 'snowballing effect'). Also, TMA06 was due during this period and we know that it was very time consuming.

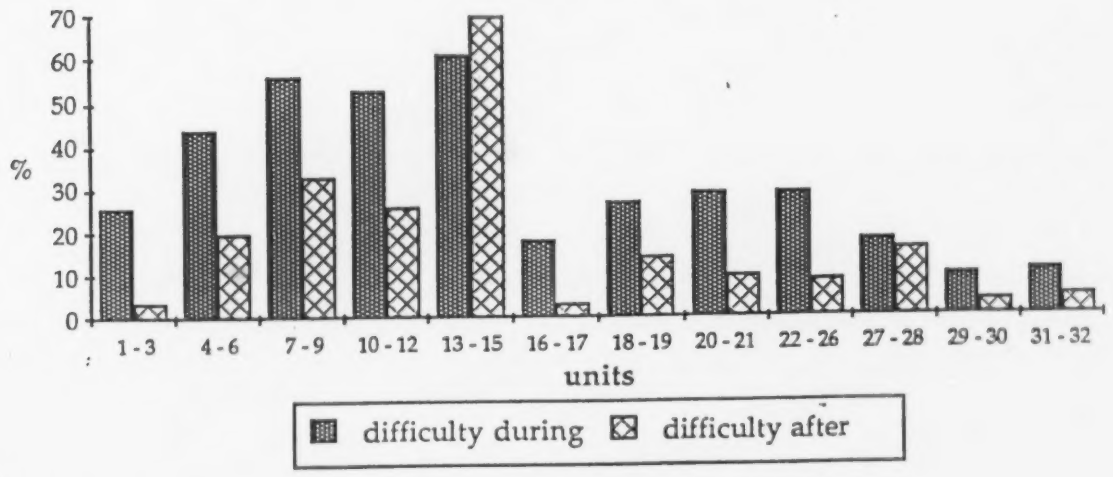
3. Only in two instances is there a marked rise in retrospective perceptions of workload:
   Introduction to Music
   Introduction to Philosophy

   These blocks were perceived as 'difficult' both at the time of study, and in retrospect. It may be that these units are not as well reinforced as some in the later, interdisciplinary, blocks.

4. The Moral Values and Representation of the People blocks do not score highly on workload. Unfortunately there is evidence to suggest that a number of students skipped or skimmed these blocks, so the ratings for workload measured during the course do not ,perhaps, reflect the full picture.

FIGURE 6

A COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED DIFFICULTY DURING AND AFTER THE A102 COURSE (1987)



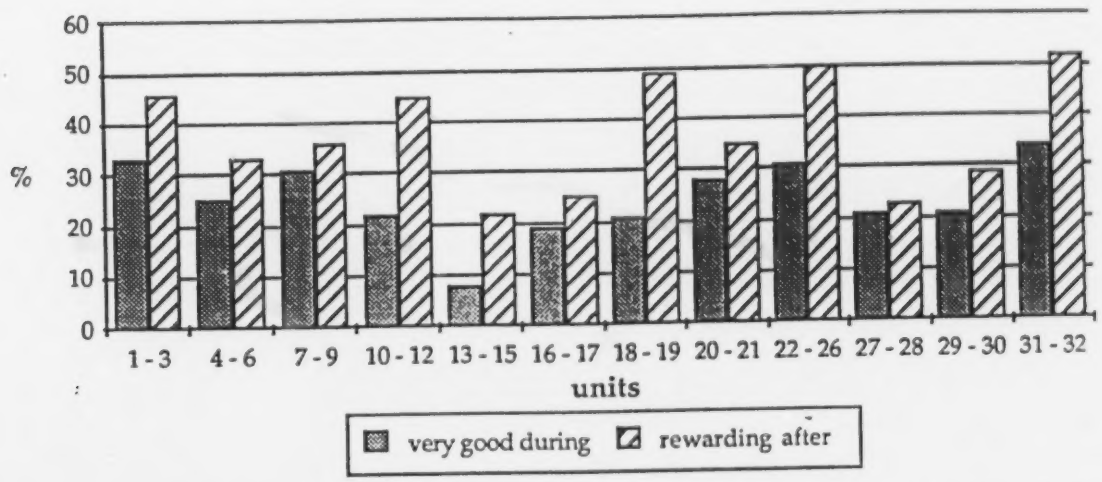
1. The 'difficulty factor', as perceived after the examination, has decreased very markedly for all blocks except for the Introduction to Philosophy.

2. Again we suggest that those subjects which are reinforced during later stages of the course 'improve' their difficulty rating as students become more familiar with the ideas and methods of a discipline.

3. We also think that at the time of study, some blocks appear more 'difficult' than they might otherwise have done because of the workload.

FIGURE 7

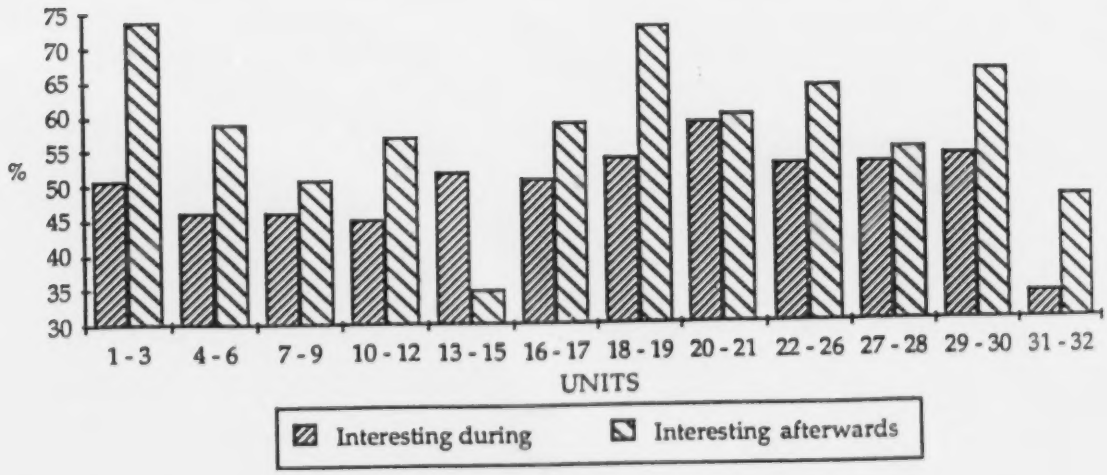
BLOCKS FOUND REWARDING DURING THE A102 COURSE AND AFTERWARDS (1987)



1. In retrospect students found all blocks of the course even more rewarding than they did when first studying them.

2. Those blocks which fare particularly well in retrospect are:
   Introduction to History/Religion/Culture/Revision
   We suggest that those blocks which were found to be particularly rewarding were either those which are continually reinforced at later stages of the course, or those for which a TMA assignment has provided reinforcement.

A COMPARISON OF INTEREST GENERATED DURING AND AFTER THE A102 COURSE (1987)



1. Most blocks were found to have been more interesting in retrospect than when first studied, especially the Introduction to History and the Religion block.

2. The Introduction to Philosophy alone was thought to have been less interesting in retrospect, although when studied it scored quite highly.

In the process of evaluating A102 I became very interested in the difficulties experienced by adult students beginning study of Philosophy. This led me to propose an in-depth study of a new Philosophy course, A310: Life and Death, which would build on the insights I had gained from A102 and enable me to test out some of my ideas. As a result of that study[10] I am preparing a paper for practising philosophy teachers about those difficulties, having identified theories of discourse as a helpful framework for my analysis. This sequence of events illustrates one way in which 'action-research' can become a matter of 'theorising-practice'. In future my approach to researching philosophy units and courses in the 'action-research' mode will be informed by this attempt to theorise, which will in turn give rise to new issues requiring explanation.

4. Some issues in the organisation and conduct of pedagogical research in distance education

As we saw at the start, the UK OU took the decision to 'centralise' pedagogical research by establishing an IET, as an academic but non-course making unit, with the main responsibility for conducting it. If a unit of this kind is well organised there are advantages in such centralisation for the institution as a whole. For example, administrators and policy-makers know how and where to channel their requests for information, and can fund a unit's activities relatively easily. They can also identify where responsibility for the results lies. However, it is equally easy for them to identify such a unit as 'non-course making' in the sense of 'non-productive' and so the first in line for a reduction in funding, or even for closure, in times of trouble. And 'difference' in function can result in the marginalisation of such a unit within the institution, even in good times. Individuals within such a unit can come to feel unappreciated and cut off from the other academic units with which it is supposed to work closely. The application and dissemination of its pedagogical research then becomes a 'problem' for it and for the institution as a whole. Eventually pedagogical discourse in general can become confined to such a unit, ghetto-ised and seen by the institution at large as being 'taken care of' by an IET. That unit may well become progressively inward looking, the individuals within it suffering loss of confidence and low morale.

Yet if a centralised function of this kind is well organised, flexible enough to respond, and confident enough to initiate activities, it brings certain benefits to individual researchers. An IET provides them with continuity (membership of a Centre) while external demands may mean frequent changes of activity and direction. Most important, it also functions as a 'society', a forum within which discourses about pedagogy are taken seriously by all its members and can develop. (It seems to me that the absence of such a supportive forum, and of the possibility of collaborative work, are the most serious objections to locating researchers in a number of other academic units, or of otherwise scattering them institutionally or geographically.) If such a unit is at the same time to avoid the dangers of marginalisation and isolation I mentioned earlier, then it must I think have a strong, but consultative, management struture. A multiplicity of 'clients' and the need for speedy and appropriate responses to both external

requests for information or assistance, and to new developments in pedagogy and delivery systems, means that an IET workforce takes a good deal of organising. Staff must understand and approve both overall policy and individual instances of decision-making if they are to work flexibly and co-operatively. Owing to the usually somewhat precarious position of such units within institutions of higher education, and the possibility of internal fracturing, it is also vital that they have strong and stimulating intellectual leadership. This is even more important in view of the absence of a unifying theory or set of theories of pedagogy - a goal towards which an IET must constantly strive.

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2. Adrian Kirkwood (1988) 'Computers in distance education - student access and issues of openness', Open Learning, Vol.3, No.3.

3. Gill Kirkup (1989) 'Equal Opportunities and computing at the Open University', Open Learning, February 1989.

4. Adrian Kirkwood and Gill Kirkup (1988) 'Computing on DT200, M205 and M371 - Report of the Initial Survey of Spring 1988', CITE Report No.65, IET (internal).

5. Arthur Marwick et al (1986) A102 Course Guide. Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

6. Ellie Chambers, Nicola Durbridge and Helen Pearson (1986/7) A102 An Arts Foundation Course, Reports 1-13, IET (internal).

7. The Report on Examination and Assessment 1987, Open University (internal).

8. Erika Langmuir (1986) A102 Units 10-12: Introduction to Art History, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

9. Stuart Brown and Godfrey Vesey (1986) A102 Units 13-15: Introduction to Philosophy, Open University Press, Milton Keynes.

10. Ellie Chambers and Helen Pearson (1988/89) A310: Life and Death Reports 1-5, IET (internal).

A102 AN ARTS FOUNDATION COURSE: AIMS AND COURSE COMPONENTS

AIMS OF THE COURSE

1. To stimulate your interest in, and enthusiasm for, the study of the arts, and to provide a basis for further more detailed study at post-foundation level.

2. To help you develop the basic skills of clear and logical thinking, and of selecting relevant material, interpreting it, and expressing yourself in good English prose, and to introduce you to what is meant by education and the learning process at university level.

3. To introduce the separate purposes and methods of the different individual disciplines in the arts.

4. To stress the general idea that the arts disciplines should not be kept in separate compartments, but can and should be brought together both in the study of particular problems and in any comprehensive study of the values and standards of society. This idea will be developed in an interdisciplinary study of culture and society in Britain 1850-90.

MAIN COURSE COMPONENTS

32 Correspondence Texts ('units'), each representing one week's work (bound in 'blocks' of between 2-5 units), viz:

Introduction to History	units 1-3
Introduction to Literature	units 4-6
Introduction to Music	units 7-9
Introduction to Art History	units 10-12
Introduction to Philosophy	units 13-15
The Great Exhibition/ Introduction to Interdisciplinary study	units 16-17
Religion: Conformity and Controversy/ Moral Values and the Social Order	units 18-21
Culture: Production, Consumption and Status	units 22-26
The Representation of the People/ Town and Country	units 27-30
Conclusion and Revision	units 31-32

Printed correspondence texts are the backbone of the course: each text contains most of the teaching material for that week's work. However, at various points in each text students are directed to view a related **TV programme**, listen to **radio** or **cassette**, read a chapter of a **set book**, a story or poem, study **illustrations**, or whatever. The texts contain exercises which are designed to integrate all this work, to enable the development of important reading, writing, analytical and judgemental skills, and to encourage independent and critical thought. Discussion of these exercises is included in the texts which are informal in style, resembling 'tutorials-in-print'. The texts are prepared by the **course team**, and professionally designed and published in A4 format with wide margins. They often contain pictures, plans and diagrams as well as print, and include references and a bibliography.

32 Broadcast Television Programmes, each of 25 minutes, relating to each of the 32 weeks of the course. They, and the radio programmes and cassettes, are produced by the OU/BBC to broadcast programme standards.

16 Radio Programmes, each of 20 minutes, broadcast every two weeks and related to the 'block' being studied.

Broadcast Notes Booklet, containing advice about what to read before viewing each programme (TV and radio), what questions to look out for, extra factual information, exercises to be completed after viewing and partial 'answers' to the questions/exercises set.

5 Audio-cassettes (4 x 90 mins., 1 x 30 mins - divided into 'bands' of varying duration), relating to each 'block' of the course.

Cassette Booklet, similar to Broadcast Notes booklet but containing more exercises and related material. Students may be asked to stop the tape quite frequently and read, think, write, calculate, study a painting (or whatever) using material contained in the booklet or from other sources. So a 15 minute cassette band may take students 30-45 minutes to work through.

Set Books These are not covered by the course fee - students must purchase them. At various points in the units students are asked to read chapters, refer to tables (etc.) and answer questions about what they have studied.

Best, G. (1979, reprinted 1985) Mid-Victorian Britain, Fontana
Dickens, C. (1969 Penguin edition) Hard Times
Gombrich, E.H. (1983 edition) Art and Illusion, Phaidon
Golby, J. (ed.) (1986) Culture and Society in Britain 1850-90: A source book of contemporary writings, OUP. This 'Course Reader' was prepared by the A102 course team especially for the course and published by Oxford University Press.

Illustration Booklet A bound 'block' containing some 64 colour plates and 120 black and white reproductions to be used with the Art History units and throughout Part 2 of the course.

Summer School booklet Each student must attend a residential school for one week during the summer period. Schools are held in Universities throughout the country, vacated by their own staff and students for the summer holiday. Part 1 of the course is revised and part 2 taught (in anticipation of what will come later in the course). The entire week is spent in face-to-face sessions - mainly small seminar and discussion groups, led by a team of tutors mainly drawn from the Arts Faculty and from **regional tutor-counsellors**. The summer school booklet helps prepare students for this intensive week's study.

Face-to-face (regional) Tuition Teachers from institutions of Higher and Further Education around the country are appointed as part-time tutor counsellors for the course. Each has a group of approx. 25 students: every student is allocated to a tutor-counsellor. There are several study centres in each region and at least two Arts Foundation Course tutors are attached to each one. The tutors are paid to give a two-hour tutorial approx. every two weeks between February and mid September (except for the Summer School period July-August). Students may attend all, some or none of these tutorials, given by either of the tutors at their centre (i.e.they may attend a maximum of one per week).

Correspondence Tuition These tutors also mark their students' written assignments (8 in all during the course). The grades for assignments constitute the 'continuous assessment' grade for the course, which amounts to 50% of the total (end-of-course) grade - with an end-of-course exam accounting for the other 50% of the total grade. However, since many students cannot or do not attend tutorials, tutors are trained to mark assignments in such a way that students can learn from the experience of writing them - hence 'correspondence tuition.' Records of all grades for the course are kept on computer at the OU.

Assignments Booklet This contains the assignment questions for the course. Each one is accompanied by notes of guidance for the students. An introductory section gives students advice about essay writing in general. They are also invited to study Cassette 1 which offers them further guidance, and exercises, in the preparation of assignment answers.